

Utah State Capitol rededicated

KSL.com

January 4th, 2008 @ 10:20pm

Keith McCord reporting

It's been a special day at the Utah State Capitol building. It was rededicated after a four-year renovation, which has brought the 92-year-old building up to date both technologically and seismically.

Today's ceremony was quite the affair. The rotunda was filled to capacity.

"My friends and fellow Utahns, today we celebrate Utah's 112th birthday. How appropriate, therefore, that we have gathered to rededicate this great symbol of statehood: our Capitol," Gov. Jon Huntsman said.

It was a ceremony filled with music and a lot of color to fit the brand new look of the renovated building.

The program was based on the program used during the original dedication of the Capitol back in 1916. The event began at 2 p.m.--same time as the first dedication. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir sang today, as it did back then. There were a number of other singing and musical performances as well.

First Lady May Kay Huntsman began the program with a bell-ringing ceremony, with bell choirs from various schools taking part.

The first speaker of the afternoon was the man in charge of the \$227 million renovation project, architect David Hart. "For those in the rotunda seated here today, and for those of you who will visit the Capitol over the next year, I encourage you to take note of the decorative arts, the detailed craftsmanship, the beautiful marble, and the exquisite light fixtures. These remarkable items have been restored to their original conditions, colors and textures. The quality of this historic restoration ranks among the best in the world," he explained.

LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley offered the dedicatory prayer. "This is the official house of the people of the state of Utah. May it be preserved from the elements of nature, may wisdom dictate all that is said and done here," he said. "May the people whose building it is feel free to wander its halls and marble staircases, admiring their resplendent beauty. We thus offer our prayer of rededication in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, Amen."

The choirs then sang "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" to wrap up the program. After that, there was a big gala to celebrate.

Now that the building is rededicated, public tours will begin tomorrow and will run all week from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.